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BERLIN CHRONOLOGY

A Chronology of Reports Concerning the Berlin Situation
(Received During the Week Ending at 1200 EST 12 January 1965)

25X1A

This is a working paper prepared in the
EE Division, Sino-Soviet Bloc Area, Office
of Current Intelligence, CIA

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28 Dec Moscow beamed to the UK an English language commentary reiterating the Soviet UN proposal for a nonaggression pact between NATO and Pact countries. The commentary suggested that FRG policy, termed "revanchist concepts and militarist plans," should be "thrown overboard." (UNCL)

29 Dec Soviet Ambassador to the GDR, P. A. Abrasimov, gave a reception to all diplomatic representations accredited to the GDR at the Embassy in East Berlin. GDR deputy foreign ministers Koenig and Krolikowski attended the affair, which Neues Deutschland termed "cordial and friendly." (UNCL)

Both the Embassy and the Mission continued to sample reaction to the announcement of the synthetic fiber plant utilizing a US chemical process slated to be built in East Germany. In his press conference, Brandt expressed "regret" that the West had not made more progress in developing a unified trade policy toward the bloc. However, he thought press treatment of the transaction was "too narrow" since the projected fiber plant was not the first instance of Western trade with the East Germans. The FRG Foreign Ministry issued a press statement pointing out that trade between East Germany and the US totalled only \$4.5 million for the first six months of 1964--after deducting \$13.5 million in agricultural products and coal. It further stated that the terms of the transaction only called for the transfer of "technical data"--not an entire plant facility--and no US technicians were expected to go to the Soviet Zone. Bild Zeitung printed the Embassy statement about the USG never maintaining that it had informed the Fed Rep in advance of the transaction but the tabloid charged that the Germans "were at least supposed to be tricked." They also intended to print an open letter asking Litwin Engineering Company of Wichita to "drop its plans in view of political implications." Frankfurter Rundschau said the affair was "becoming a matter of first-rate political significance" and the Neue Rhein Ruhr Zeitung cited "discord between Bonn and Washington." General Anzeiger said the Germans had been made to look like fools. (UNCL)

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29 Dec
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Aleksandr Galkin, broadcasting from Moscow in German, said reunification depends on a fundamental improvement in the relations between the German Federal Republic and the GDR. He called the Berlin pass agreement an omen of a fresh approach to existing problems. Charging that failure to obtain an initiative at the NATO conference in Paris in December was due to FRG designs on nuclear armaments, Galkin said politicians holding such views must be dumped or "failure and disaster will be constant companions" of West German foreign policy. (UNCL)

30 Dec

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31 Dec

In an attempt to "explore every avenue," the Mission asked a Soviet Embassy East Berlin official, conveying New Year's greetings to inform Panin that the USG would like the Soviets to use their good offices to obtain Van Altena's release. A Department suggestion for using the synthetic fiber plant transaction as a lever to obtain Van Altena's release was thought by the Mission to be of "doubtful utility." The Mission further felt that the East Germans would not be moved by any suggestion that the USG was "under pressure"--presumably from the FRG--since Pankow is "never disturbed by anything which produces strains in Washington-Bonn relations." (SECRET)

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31 Dec
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The Embassy agreed with the Department's view that progress toward Van Altena's release had been unsatisfactory. However, it opposed as too complicated a suggestion to use the synthetic fiber plant deal as a lever. Since FRG criticism of the transaction already was vociferous, the USG would run the risk of "increasing the difficulties on this score." The Embassy suggested that possibly other licenses or wheat orders, for example, might be used. It agreed that an approach to Panin was in order; the US Chargé had authorized such an approach that day. The Embassy commented that "US interest has been cynically manipulated by Kaul, and has not been particularly taken into consideration in Senat and West German deliberations on the matter of lawyer exchange." (SECRET)

After reviewing the Embassy's comments on linking the synthetic fiber plant transaction with the Van Altena affair, the Department reconsidered its suggestion. Faced with the prospect that the USG might have been duped by Kaul and slighted by the Senat and FRG in deliberations for a lawyers' exchange, the Department advised the Embassy and the Mission to impress upon the West Germans the importance the US attached to Van Altena's release as a precondition of a lawyers' exchange--particularly one that included Kaul. (SECRET)

1-3 Jan

A 21-year-old women and 19-year-old man escaped into West Berlin by mingling with returning Passierscheine crowds at the Friedrichstrasse U-Bahn station in East Berlin. (CONF)

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- 2 Jan Speculating on the outcome of the Bundestag elections, the Embassy emphasized the close race between the SPD and the CDU/CSU for a plurality. Recent local elections and opinion polls indicated an upsurge in SPD popularity--presumably because many West German voters view Brandt's party as one of progress and initiative. Removal of the threat of a Franco-German confrontation, a miscalculation on the part of the SPD in its dealings with the East, or improved relations within the CDU/CSU all would tend to lessen SPD chances and enhance those of the Erhard administration. Whatever the outcome, the Embassy felt that present US/FRG relations, based on efficient administration and a consonance of objectives in foreign affairs, would not be effected. (CONF)
- 3 Jan The Mission felt that recession of the ban on Kaul was the most promising lever for obtaining Van Altena's release available to the West. Since several East German lawyers--Vogel for example--already practice in West Berlin, GDR interest in arranging for a mutual exchange probably is less than that of the West--leaving only the ban on Kaul. (SECRET)

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4 Jan

East Berlin domestic service commentator Fritz Klein discussed "Washington's rather brusque rejection of Bonn's proposal for an initiative in the German question." He interpreted the US statement calling upon West Germans to submit concrete plans for European security, disarmament, and borders as a way of saying the US must not be "harnessed to the Federal Republic's revanchist electioneering purposes." (UNCL)

Neues Deutschland called Erhard's proposal for an initiative a "campaign device." ND said the result was the Americans "turned up their noses" because they did not want to promote a "West German election campaign." (UNCL)

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5 Jan

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung reported 13,134 resettlers from the eastern regions under Polish administration had arrived at the Friedland reception camp during 1964--an increase of more than 3,700 over 1963. FAZ said the number of returnees from the Soviet Union also had increased in 1964. (UNCL)

Moscow domestic service carried a Russian language commentary citing "panic" among the West German administration over US policy regarding an initiative, MLF, and the synthetic fiber plant transaction. The commentary charged that Bonn was deliberately exaggerating the "serious foreign policy crisis" in order to "strengthen its shaken prestige." In conclusion, it asserted, that by aggravating the tension in Europe, the FRG hoped to "force the armaments race" and bring about a nuclear-armed Wehrmacht. (UNCL)

East Berlin Deutschlandsender commentator Jochen Mueller called President Johnson's "State of the Union" message and plan for a Great Society "a visionary building project." Exceptionally critical, Mueller ridiculed the idea of giving equal opportunities to a populace where "millionaires and workers live together." Mueller asked: "can a house be built from visions only?" He doubted anything could be done about illiteracy, unemployment, or slums. Calling the speech "a general outline" devoid of necessary details, Mueller said the evils of American society could not be abolished by building "castles in the air." (UNCL)

The Mission reported 32 balloon sightings in the south and center corridors between 15 December and 2 January. (CONF)

5 Jan
Con't

The Embassy speculated that the French dream of turning Tegel into a full-fledged jet airport had been tempered by the success of the Boeing 727 tests at Tempelhof. Previously the French had assumed that Tempelhof could not accommodate jets and that all jet traffic would move to Tegel and come under French military control. Air France realized now that, as long as it alone operated from Tegel, it would be isolated from the center of Berlin's business activity. Faced with the difficulties of operating civil operations from a purely military airport and the estimated DM 200 million outlay required to equip Tegel for full-scale jet operations, the French were likely to adopt a more liberal policy toward Allied use of "their" airport. (CONF)

In a discussion with Ruete of the FRG Foreign Ministry, the Embassy pointed out that the lawyers' exchange proposal had been linked with the release of Van Altena. The Embassy stressed US displeasure over the fact that this linkage seemed to have disappeared. With this in mind, it warned that should Van Altena receive a severe sentence the US would find it difficult to support the lawyers exchange--specifically the readmission of Kaul. Ruete speculated that the lawyers' exchange might still accomplish van Altena's release, even after sentencing, since the GDR might wish only to establish its "sovereignty" in the matter. (SECRET)

Von Winterfeld informed the Mission that Van Altena's trial had concluded in Neubrandenburg and that sentencing would take place on 7 January. Charged with "organized enticement to defection in an aggravated form through use of a weapon," Van Altena was liable to as much as eight years. Defense attorney Kaul sought to reduce the charge to "assistance in offense against the pass law," which would carry a much lighter sentence--possibly two years. (SECRET)

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5 Jan
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The Bonn Foreign Ministry confirmed Francois Seydoux's assignment as the new French Ambassador to the FRG. Local cynics commented that Seydoux's assignment to Bonn reflected a downgrading of France's relations with the FRG--just as his appointment to NATO in 1962 came at a time when De Gaulle was downgrading that organization. (LOU)

Der Spiegel claimed the synthetic fiber plant transaction was intended to "unblock GDR notenbank accounts in New York" so that the East Germans could use these funds to pay for the plant. Spiegel further charged that chances for consumation of the deal were enhanced by US desire to improve Bloc trade for balance-of-payments reasons. Handelsblatt reported that John Brown, a British firm, had concluded a deal with the USSR to provide a 100 million mark synthetic fiber plant to the Soviets on 12-year credit terms. The West German trade journal asked: "1. How can the British grant long-term credits to the Bloc while the pound is being supported by the IMF?; 2. Will this new British credit make it more difficult for the FRG to resist Soviet demands for credit in the trade agreement negotiations expected to begin this spring?; 3. Does the Litwin deal mean the US will also try to expand trade with the USSR?; and 4. Should the FRG counter these moves by permitting and guaranteeing five-year credits to the USSR?" (LOU)

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East German border guard fire turned back two refugees attempting to escape into the American Sector from Klein Machnow, a small town on the outskirts of Berlin. West German police, who reported the incident, could not determine whether the refugees were hit. (UNCL)

Berliner Rundfunk reported 948 returnees and resettlers had come to the GDR from West Germany in December. The GDR radio said another 113 arrived in the first week of 1965. (UNCL)

West German press concentrated on President Johnson's "State of the Union" message and for the most part applauded the "Great Society" program but suggested that perhaps more time could have been devoted to foreign policy. Koelnische Rundschau stressed the positive foreign policy objectives mentioned by the President, i.e., reunification, Vietnam, and the invitation to the Soviet leaders. The Rheinische Post said Johnson "no longer stands in the shadow of his great predecessor, but has developed his own ideas and follows his own line." However, General-Anzeiger criticized the fact that only ten words of the speech had been devoted to the German problem and that these words did not change the fact that "the President does not intend to take any initiative on the German question." Frankfurter Neue Presse said the invitation to the Russian leaders indicated that the President was more interested in maintaining the status quo than in progress. (UNCL)

The Mission, noting that Litwin representatives were expected in East Berlin "soon" to complete negotiations for the synthetic fiber plant, alerted the Department to unfavorable West Berlin press reaction. It said the GDR media, hawking details of the transaction, would not miss an opportunity to "twist the knife" when the deal was consummated. The Mission suggested Paris as an alternate location for finalizing the contract and intended to try to persuade Litwin to hold publicity to a minimum. (CONF)

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During a conversation with CBS correspondent Dan Schorr, Brandt summarized his latest ideas for achieving "movement towards German reunification:" (1) a draft German peace treaty should be prepared in order to spell out Western ideas and as a possible basis for talks with the Soviet; (2) the 1959 Herter plan might be a point of departure for developing the Western position; (3) the West Germans must specify negotiable terms for reunification; and (4) the West should not expand trade with the GDR to the detriment of IZT because this type of East-West German contact was essential to keep alive the feeling of affiliation between the two German states. (CONF)

Von Hase's remarks following Ambassador McGhee's briefing of Erhard the previous day were, for the most part, favorably reported in the West German press. Die Welt said press statements about Secretary Rusk's backgrounder had created "erroneous impressions." Rusk's backgrounder was the subject of DPA coverage and the wire service said the "German question remains an essential element of US policy." However, Frankfurter Rundschau said Erhard was satisfied that the US effort for reunification would not be relaxed but that McGhee was unable to promise the Chancellor a new initiative in the near future. An editorial in Die Welt suggested that Erhard's proposal for an initiative might have been intended as a domestic move, rather than one of foreign policy. The General Anzeiger said despite reassurances "Johnson's words are entirely noncommittal and do not change whatsoever the fact that the President does not intend to take any initiative on the German question." (LOU)

USCOB reported that the two men apprehended while trying to escape into the American Sector in the Klein-Machnow area may have been accompanied by two women. West Berlin police saw two women being escorted away from the same area at about the same time as the abortive escape attempt. (CONF)

6 Jan
Con't

West Berlin police received an anonymous phone tip that the Schoeneberg Rathaus would be blown up at 0500Z on 7 January. They took all necessary precautions but thought the call the work of a crank. (CONF)

At the meeting of the quadripartite Bonn group, Oncken said GDR Foreign Trade Minister Balkow had been authorized to enter Belgium without a TTD or a Belgian visa by Foreign Minister Spaak, who was pressured by Antwerp shipbuilding circles fearful of losing contracts if Balkow were not admitted. The FRG intended to handle the matter bilaterally, making a strong demarche to Brussels. The Foreign Ministry felt that the TTD question should be raised in NATO, not on the basis of the Belgian incident alone, but together with Balkows reception in Greece and other infringements of TTD policy. The Bonn group agreed the incident should not be ignored and that the time had come to approve the British draft paper calling for "a firm and uniform adherence to NATO policy on TTD's by all NATO members." A meeting to thrash-out the final text was scheduled for 11 January. (SECRET)

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7 Jan

UPI reported from Frankfurt that "Fashing" had begun. The annual German ritual will last 58 days this year--ending 3 March, Ash Wednesday--as compared to only 36 days last year. (UNCL)

Oncken informed the quadripartite Bonn group that the Cabinet would meet in Berlin on 13 January. Oncken's announcement was "clearly in the nature of informing rather than consulting the Allies," according to the Embassy. The Allies agreed to make a pro forma reply in order to demonstrate interest and responsibility in such matters. The Embassy thought the meeting would be played in a low key with a minimum of publicity resulting. (CONF)

Von Winterfeld informed the Mission that Van Altena had been sentenced to eight years. Kaul had appealed the sentence and told von Winterfeld that a chance still existed to obtain Van Altena's release through a lawyers' exchange. The Mission was uncertain whether Kaul was expressing the official East German view, or merely his own. It felt that Kaul's status would be revealed in the course of discussions between Senat and GDR representatives. (SECRET)

Ambassador McGhee advised Secretary of Agriculture Freeman to accept the Senat's invitation to attend Green Week, the annual international agricultural meeting held in Berlin. The Senat already had received acceptances that agricultural ministers of France, Switzerland, and the FRG will attend the meeting to begin 29 January. Officials from France, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Austria, Sweden, and Algeria attended last year's meeting. The Ambassador also hoped the Secretary would have time to stop in Bonn. (UNCL)

French Ambassador De Margerie paid a farewell call on Soviet Ambassador Abrasimov. Abrasimov said reunification was not for the "near future," and that the GDR would never give up its "socialist order." However, he thought the two German states should negotiate with each other. De Margerie made the standard rebuttals and when asked about Franco-German relations replied that they were excellent. Abrasimov commented that, although Soviet-French relations were good, there was room for improvement.

The French Mission commented sadly that in an exchange of books on painting, De Margerie wound up with one on "contemporary Soviet art." (CONF)

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A young East Berlin refugee was wounded and captured while trying to escape into the French Sector near Bernauerstrasse. He had made his way through the 300-foot-wide security zone on the eastern side of the Wall before being struck in the right leg. West Berlin police saw him being led away to an ambulance. (UNCL)

The Embassy sought British and French CAA concurrence on PanAm Boeing 727 jet service to Tempelhof. Responding to a request from the airline's German director, Rodenbaugh, who said he had to have approval by 11 January or risk a six-months delay in delivery of the aircraft, the embassy contacted the French and British Civil Air Attaches who declined comment before getting their respective Berlin Missions' opinions. The Federal Transport Ministry also sidestepped the issue until "responsible FedRep officials had an opportunity to consider the operation." Rodenbaugh was of the opinion that German officials had nothing to do with Berlin air services and should be told simply that PanAm would go ahead with its plans regardless of any German reservation. The Embassy commented that PanAm probably would attempt to pressure the Allies to disregard German feelings in the matter. (CONF)

Transport Senator Theuner told the Mission that "under no circumstances" could the Senat give its approval for PanAm to take up the option on jets for Berlin service on 11 January. Theuner felt that approval could not be expected for at least three months. Calling the airline "one of Berlin's best friends," the Senator thought the request for immediate action posed too great a timing problem for the Berlin government. He thought the reduction of the number of flights resulting from the introduction of jet service would be unacceptable and favored use of DC-6's on the the Hamburg and Hannover routes indefinitely. The Mission suggested that PanAm brief the Senat on its plans in order to hasten action. (CONF)

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Dr. Karl Lieser, officer-in-charge of air matters in the Senat's Office for Transportation and Utilities, gave the Mission a copy of the FRG report on noise level tests conducted at Tempelhof during the Boeing 727 test flight in December. The summary concluded that the jet noise had not exceeded to any great degree that of Viscount and DC-6 aircraft now in use. Dr. Lieser was rather noncommittal on the results of the study but said that the Senat now had something with which to counter adverse public opinion. He said the Tempelhof district assembly planned to debate the question of jet operations sometime in mid-January. Debate in the Senat was another matter, according to Dr. Lieser, since that body "was hard put" in reassessing the proposed expansion of Tegel. (CONF)

ADN charged the FRG with staging an "invasion" of West Berlin by holding Bundestag meetings in the city. The East German news service said the meetings would be held "outside West German territory" if they were held in Berlin. (UNCL)

A West Berlin court ruled that an eight-year-old girl, living with her father and grandparents in West Berlin, would be returned to her mother in East Germany. The mother was represented by Friedrich Kaul, described in the AP dispatch as "a star attorney for the East German Communist party. (UNCL)

The Allied representatives to the quadripartite Bonn group informed Oncken that their governments' attitudes toward the FRG Cabinet meeting scheduled for 13 January were essentially the same as those last October. The French rep reiterated De Margerie's comment of that time reaffirming the rights and responsibilities of the Allies for maintaining the security of Berlin. He pointed out the relatively short interval between the two meetings and suggested that the possibility of a more adverse Communist reaction to this session could not be excluded. The British rep thought it inadvisable to issue a special statement on Berlin or Germany following the meeting--in keeping with the intention not to publicize the event. Oncken said he appreciated the Allied views and that he had been assured by the Chancellor's office that publicity would be held to a minimum. (CONF)

8 Jan
Con't

LIVEOAK transmitted the following convoy schedule for the week 10-16 January:

1. 10 Jan. Nil
 2. 11 Jan. US-4 From Berlin 9 vehicles & 18 crewmen
 3. 12 Jan. Nil
 4. 13 Jan. US-5 To Berlin 8 vehicles & 16 crewmen
 5. 14 Jan. US-6 From Berlin 18 vehicles, 36 crewmen & 45 passengers
 6. 15 Jan. US-7 To Berlin 22 vehicles & 44 crewmen
 7. 16 Jan. US-8 From Berlin 8 vehicles & 16 crewmen
 8. 16 Jan. Nil
- (CONF)

The Department said it would not object to a Four Power initiative to raise the TTD issue and Balkow case in POLADS if the West Germans insisted. However, bringing the subject up in NATO might risk "erosion of the TTD system." If the Belgians were cited in NATO for violations in the Balkow case, the Department said that in all fairness the Canadians, Greeks, Dutch, Icelanders, and Portuguese would also have to be called to account. (CONF)

Press chief von Hase said European policy would be the main item on the agenda of the Erhard-De Gaulle talks scheduled for 19-20 January. One proposal the Chancellor was sure to advance was a conference of the six heads of government in the spring. Von Hase said that, if De Gaulle touched on the subject of Germany's eastern boundaries, Erhard would repeat the position that the boundary question was part of a final peace treaty to be negotiated by a reunified Germany and the Allies. The FRG Foreign Ministry was optimistic that the pending meeting would have more favorable results than the one held in Bonn last July. Ministers Schroeder and Westrick will accompany the Chancellor. (LOU)

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8 Jan
Con't

At a press conference following the first meeting of the SPD election team in Bonn, Brandt outlined his party's policy formulations in terms the Embassy described as "remarkable for their inoffensive and non-controversial nature." Brandt said his party would encourage European unity, and, since disarmament was impossible, the SPD would support a lessening of tensions. Through a policy of small steps the SPD hoped to convince the German public that self-determination, European integration, and the preservation of the peace were problems that required a mutual solution. The Mayor said any FRG initiative must be planned and sensible and not interfere with a East/West detente. In Europe, the SPD would widen the European communities and strengthen the European parliament. It would suggest a European-American coordinating committee so Europe could develop as an equal partner of the US. And toward France the party would advocate cooperation through a treaty, European goals and Atlantic ties. (LOU)

9 Jan

A British sergeant, his wife and six-year-old son were involved in an accident on the Autobahn when the civilian vehicle they were riding in went out of control after striking a tire dropped by a West German truck. The sergeant, driving the car, lost two teeth; his wife sustained a broken leg and the child appeared uninjured. The driver of the truck stopped long enough to retrieve the lost tire then left the scene of the accident. Soviet and East German personnel were cooperative, placing warning flares beside the wreck and admitting the ambulance and wrecker with dispatch. E G police conducted an accident investigation at the scene, approximately six miles west of Checkpoint Bravo. (CONF)

11 Jan

The Embassy reported that the All-German Affairs and Foreign Affairs Committee of the Bundestag might discuss the FDP's interpellation for a report on all forms of Allied-Soviet Zone relations. The request was prompted by the publicity on the synthetic fiber plant transaction and, according to the Embassy, might serve to blunt criticism of the US deal if similar French and British negotiations were brought to light. (CONF)

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The Embassy said they had received word from the French CAA that his country had no objections to PanAm's conversion to jets and the British CAA expected to be able to give approval soon. The Embassy had no idea when FRG and Senat authorities would reply, since they were not accustomed to discussions involving Berlin aviation matters and would be under pressure from the possibility of noise suits and the proposed expansion of Tegel. (CONF)

Embassy Paris queried the Department regarding possible quadripartite meeting on the German problem to be held when the UNGA resumes, specifically whether the matter had been discussed with the French. French Foreign Minister Couve de Murville's plans to go to the US were not yet firm. (CONF)

Neues Deutschland charged that the scheduled Bundestag committee sessions in West Berlin were "organized provocation," a violation of international law and a "further intensification of West German revanchism." The Mission commented that ND's criticism thus far followed the same line as its criticism of the October 1964 Bundestag sessions in Berlin. Moscow Tass announced that Erhard arrived in West Berlin for a three-day visit. The Soviet dispatch said the Chancellor would summon a cabinet meeting and address CDU supporters. The article said nearly all Bonn Ministers and all deputies would take part in more than 80 meetings scheduled for the Berlin gathering, and that the M.P.'s meeting would be held in the restored portion of the former "Nazi Reichstag." (CONF)

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